

BOOK REVIEW

STEVEN CARROLL and STEVEN SALT. 2004. **Ecology for Gardeners**. (ISBN: 0-88192-611-6, hbk.). Timber Press Inc. 133 S.W. Second Ave, Suite 450, Portland, OR 97204-3527, U.S.A. (**Orders:** www.timberpress.com, mail@timberpress.com, 503-227-2878, 1-800-327-5680, 503-227-3070 fax). \$29.95, 420 pp., 11 b&w figures, 170 color photos, glossary, and common, scientific and subject indices, 6" × 9".

With *Ecology For Gardeners*, authors Steven Carroll and Steven Salt have written a book that is essential for any gardener's shelf. Their book keeps ecological principles in mind while dealing with the subject of gardening.

Ecology for Gardeners provides readers with many points to pause and think about. It contains many cause & effect situations and also presents relationships between abiotic and biotic factors in your garden. The text includes discussion of seemingly unrelated topics that one may not instinctively link together at first; such as how soil temperature relates to nutrient availability for plants, intraspecific competition and plant spacing, pruning as herbivory, energy roles in a garden, the ability of the wind to alter the shape a garden, the importance of microbes to the nutrient cycling & availability in the garden, etc. Chapter topics include plant biology, non-plant garden inhabitants, the garden environment, plants and their environment, interactions among garden inhabitants, and gardening as applied ecology (stewardship and garden management).

Each chapter begins with a basic and easy to understand introduction about the topic. After the introduction for each chapter, the topic is divided into well-organized subtopics. For example, the chapter interactions among garden inhabitants include subtopics of competition, herbivory, predation, parasitism and mutualism. Another example is the garden environment chapter that is divided into sun, air, water, soil, energy, food webs, and nutrient cycles within the garden system. The subtopics expand with plentiful details specific to each subtopic itself. Representative of this style is the chapter on applied ecology in gardening; included is a subtopic of energy management. It contains a discussion on mulching varieties, benefits and drawbacks for each mulch type. The chapter on applied ecology in the garden really helps the reader bring together all the previous information of other chapters and may lead to many "Eureka!" moments. Clear color photographs exemplify many of the various plants, items, and occurrences referenced within each chapter.

The book *Ecology for Gardeners* is full of many thought provoking topics; especially for commonly used gardening strategies and the ecological basis behind them. The authors have done a fantastic job of making the ecological part of gardening very accessible to gardeners. Readers will definitely understand more of the ecology that occurs in, around, and under the plants in their garden. More importantly, gardeners will be able to make more informed garden management decisions after reading Carroll and Salt's *Ecology for Gardeners*.—Lee Luckeydoo, Herbarium, Botanical Research Institute of Texas, 509 Pecan Street, Fort Worth, TX 76102-4060, U.S.A.